



## National Association for Sport & Physical Education

An Association of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

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### **WATCHING THE OLYMPICS WITH YOUR CHILDREN**

#### **CAN BE EDUCATIONAL AND FUN**

RESTON, VA, July 9, 2004 -- Watching the upcoming Games of the XXVIII Olympiad, August 13-29, is a wonderful opportunity to springboard your own family to the joys of being physically active! Here are a few suggestions from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), the country's premiere association for physical educators.

"The celebratory spirit of the Olympics can be inspiring for introducing your children to a wide variety of new physical activities such as crew, kayaking, team handball, diving, discus and javelin," said NASPE Executive Director Charlene R. Burgeson. "Help each child identify a sport or activity that he or she would like to try or might enjoy doing as much as watching television or playing computer games."

NASPE President Dolly Lambdin, Ed.D. of the University of Texas at Austin, said "Children five to 12 years of age need at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours, of physical activity per day. Just as children and youth can learn the habit of regular physical activity, they can learn to be inactive if they are not taught the skills and given opportunities to be active throughout their developing years.

"Quality physical education, the cornerstone to developing an active lifestyle, can help students to be more active, more fit, and achieve better academically," added Dr. Lambdin. "Physical education teachers and coaches play a vital role in educating youth about the importance of practice, effort and activity. While watching and talking about the Olympics, reinforce with your children the importance of their school physical education classes for guiding their physical development and in introducing them to physical activities that they can become passionate about and enjoy for a lifetime."

- Whether it be swimming or running, encourage your children to keep improving their personal bests. Mark off the distance and use a stopwatch to time how fast they swim and run. Compare the times.
- How far can your child throw an object or jump? Measure it. Note improvements.
- Have your son or daughter try to do some of the balance beam skills on a line on the floor.
- This fall visit a physical education class. You may see in-line skating, martial arts, wall climbing, golf or tennis. Ask your children to show you some of the movement skills such as hopping, dancing, rolling or jumping that they learned in their physical education class.
- Encourage your child, with parental support, to look for opportunities to engage in new sports/activities for the value of the experience and possibly to expose your child to new recreational or competitive opportunities.
- Get out a globe or a map and show your child where he or she lives and where Athens, Greece is located. Find where your favorite athlete lives and determine what season it is there.
- What time is it at your home? What time is it in Athens?
- Stress the internationalism of the event. The linking of the rings--red, blue, black, green and yellow--represents the union of the five major continents in friendship and sport. One or more of those colors is present in the flag of every nation.
- Prior to the Games, the Olympic torch is lit by the sun's rays near Zeus' temple in Ancient Olympia. Make your own torch and have fun taking turns carrying it to the park to play.
- Have a family discussion about a different Olympic event each day – getting a broad picture of the event, the goals, and the names of American and international contenders. The U.S. Olympic team alone will have more than 600 athletes.
- Share the motto: "Swifter, higher, stronger." This great motivational slogan encourages all who participate to excel in their quest to reach the upper limits of their potential. Discuss the awards ceremony, the different levels of the awards stand, and the playing of the National Anthem of the victor's country.

- Ask your children what they learned from the media profiles of the athletes. What motivated the athlete to succeed? Did they talk about the importance of practice or focus and having a good coach or teacher?
- Discuss judging in gymnastics and diving events. What do you think the judges look for when scoring these athletes? What is important in these events that's different from other events? Practice something so you can do it with perfect form.
- Discuss good sportsmanship and fair play.
- Find a sport/activity the family has never heard of and research it at the public library and on the Internet, and then go try it in a modified version.
- Discuss with your kids how they think Olympians feel who don't bring home a medal? Have they failed?
- Did the Olympics inspire your family to become more physically active? Choose an activity that you want to do and participate in it at least several times a week.
- Have your family set physical activity goals, work toward them, and chart improvement. Talk about how practice is helping you improve. Relate this to the qualities that are needed to be an Olympian.

To help your family springboard into action, NASPE has a physical activity brochure called "*99 Tips for Family Fitness Fun*." For a free copy send a stamped-self addressed legal size (#10) envelope to: National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 1900 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191.

Information about the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) can be found on the Internet at [www.naspeinfo.org](http://www.naspeinfo.org). NASPE, which has been setting the standard for the profession for over 30 years, is the largest of the six national associations of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance (AAHPERD). A nonprofit membership organization of over 18,000 professionals in the physical activity fields, NASPE is the only national association dedicated to strengthening basic knowledge about sport and physical education among professionals and the general public. Putting that knowledge into action in schools and communities across the nation is critical to improved health and academic performance.